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**From:** Jones, Ashley [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=EECD65C891474D8C8EAB354DDEAF6BA8-JONES, ASHL]  
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**Subject:** News Update: EPA Vows To Launch Workshop Assisting States On Major Risk Analyses (Inside EPA)

## NEWS NCEA CAN USE

September 27, 2016

### EPA Vows To Launch Workshop Assisting States On Major Risk Analyses

*By David LaRoss, Inside EPA*

Published September 26, 2016

Read the original article at: <http://insideepa.com/daily-news/epa-vows-launch-workshop-assisting-states-major-risk-analyses>

WHEELING, WV -- EPA's top research official is vowing to launch a workshop in the remaining months of the Obama administration that will aim to assist state regulators as they grapple with complex risk analyses to inform their environmental policy decisions, such as the benefits and hazards of dredging contaminated sediment.

Thomas Burke, agency science advisor and deputy assistant administrator in the Office of Research & Development (ORD), agreed to the workshop in remarks during the Environmental Council of the States' (ECOS) fall meeting here on Sept. 26. Burke said that he would have the workshop running before President Obama leaves office next year. "We are running to the finish line, but I would be delighted to get that in motion," he told the meeting.

The promise to launch the effort came in response to a question during a panel discussion with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Commissioner John Linc Stine -- ECOS' current vice president who on Sept. 26 was elected to the position of president for 2016-2017 to replace outgoing President Martha Rudolph.

Stine told *Inside EPA* after the panel that the workshop will target "any community-specific regulatory challenge where you're actually trying to solve a problem by evaluating health impacts and environmental benefits -- the risks of multifaceted efforts."

ECOS represents many state environmental agencies, and the panel discussion with Burke focused on "ORD Tools for Real-World Situations."

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During the panel discussion, Stine asked Burke to organize a workshop help states apply ORD's Community-Focused Exposure and Risk Screening Tool (C-FERST) tool to help with "very complicated risk tradeoff decisions." C-FERST is designed to show community-level risk factors from ongoing contamination and other factors, and is intended to help regulators decide on cleanup measures.

Burke touted the benefits of C-FERST in response to an audience question from an Ohio regulator on how EPA can support efforts to clean up contaminated sediment near Akron, OH. Officials there are facing a dilemma since dredging the contaminated areas in order to remove the sediment would create new hazards through increased short-term exposures to the pollutants.

Burke said the tool will help answer regulators' questions on "How do we balance the tradeoffs, and how do we put a value on the ecosystem services we're restoring."

After the panel, Stine told *Inside EPA* he expects the workshop to benefit states dealing with a wide variety of environmental issues, beyond the contaminated sediment cleanup that spurred the original question.

"You could see it in a whole lot of industrial settings, for instance -- not only your traditional brownfields sites, but where you're really trying to wrestle with community health benefits and community environmental benefits, and you have choices. . . . Situations where you have costs and benefits on both sides, and you have to test the scenarios to figure out the best way forward," he said.

### **ECOS Officers**

Meanwhile, ECOS during the first day of its Sept. 26-28 fall meeting announced the election of new officers for the 2016-2017 term, including Stine's switch from vice president to president.

Stine will replace Rudolph, who also serves as director of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

ECOS also announced that Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Director Todd Parfitt will be the group's next vice president, filling the vacancy left by Stine's move to president.

Sara Parker Pauley, head of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), won the vote for the position of ECOS' secretary-treasurer. However, ECOS Executive Director Alexandra Dunn announced at the meeting that Pauley will not accept the position because she will soon step down from DNR for a new job with the state, meaning the election for the secretary-treasurer post will be held again during the fall meeting.

In a press release announcing the elections, ECOS says that Stine will focus on "tracking the impacts and progress of environmental programs and more effectively communicating these outcomes to the public."

Stine will also work to promote EPA's "E-Enterprise" project with ECOS, through which the agency and the group are trying to identify measures for streamlining operation of environmental programs.

In addition to backing E-Enterprise, ECOS says Stine will try to advance "other business process improvement techniques designed to run environmental programs more efficiently, and to increase transparency between the public and local, state, and federal governments."

ECOS and Stine also want to "advance meaningful conversations" on water infrastructure, particularly for communities in distress -- which could include Flint, MI, which is suffering from a lead in drinking water crisis that has prompted some calls for boosting Clean Water Act infrastructure funding.

In the press release, ECOS says that, "During this time of transition, the priority of the ECOS officers and Executive Committee is to build strong relationships with incumbent officials and to carry the voice of state environmental agencies to decision makers in the new administration, as well as to Congress, the business community, and nongovernmental organizations."

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### **Ashley Mayrienne Jones**

Science Communications Associate (Student Contractor)

National Center for Environmental Assessment

Office of Research and Development, U.S. EPA

[Jones.Ashley@epa.gov](mailto:Jones.Ashley@epa.gov)

703-347-0523